

~~Letters about - Bembridge~~

"There is no pleasure I am travelling except in books, a <sup>few</sup> prints".  
G. Melt.

Taking Bembridge by the South-Western Railway, the first town of importance you come to is Bembridge, how to travel more, little money for a week or two in the pleasant hope of finding a salt friend almost on every day.

A country immediately after Bembridge canal is flat, amorphously enough, lying within the London Basin, but, set out of the valley & meadows on either hand, types are mingled with the divinity-which is no charm of Hampshire beauty. At one moment, the eye rests on sweeps of shimmering corn, then is by bounding hedges, & beyond these, more plowing fields, until the openings gradually the law reveal only the pale sky. But turn your head, eyes have a wild hether west, not foot-sights "household bread or fatted steer," but the lip is more than meat: - the eightieth sounds evolutes of those Hampshire hethers, the air that blows upon them, in pure life nothing less.

Here is no reason for longing at Bembridge, here is another, you are in the heart of neighbourhood with its associations, historical & personal, how true, you easily get at neighbouring places you have ready all your lips with a trophy to the news; & you come across others, with delightful histories, of which you have never even heard. Even

See 25, N.Y. 1900

Even to the train comes into the station, your interest is excited: what is that precipitate rain on the river just above us? You ask a yellow passenger; most likely his anxiety will be void of the insects. "only an ordinary rain, we are told; but a stark answer is, 'one of the abbeys uncrossed by human soul!'

But we must in the town before we explore the river, so walk our way towards the ~~place~~ along High Street of Buryingth - the main thoroughfare of a pleasant country town, where houses & shops have 'grown' big & little, shoulder to shoulder; where big shops with acres of glass may be kept by nobodies, & what you take to a small basket or leads into an ample, well-proportioned house with good gardens behind; the little shops kept by people you know, & the master is kindly enough to say well able to tell you a great deal about Buryingth.

Buryingth is a market-town from an agricultural district ~~from 20,000~~ people; and, in 1214, Wednesday was, as now, the market-day! Here is respectable antiquity, established! Think of the farmers' games even centuries ago, gathering on the same spot, for the same purpose, on the same day of the week, & - though more purchasingly minded in present times - the example, no doubt, of the farmers' fairs today in County & Peakants; pieces of apparel, perhaps, but hard & light of heart; for 'agricultural districts,' is a very nice back to the Congress & another.

The old town has had time to grow mellow, there, in one or two streets, are quaint timbered houses with

124

with overhanging stories. Some two centuries ago,  
two ancient houses brought Beaminster into  
disrepute. In 1609, the Great Duke of Guise, <sup>of France</sup>,  
and a 'grand tour' which included England, coming  
with him a secretary wrote down his impressions  
+ an artist to illustrate them. The former building  
now ruins we have yet three brought him to  
Beaminster; the sets down the houses as poor, being  
poorly framed, subjects to the projecting stories, (but indeed)  
that a foreign prince, used to the massive  
substantial structures of his own land, could think  
on domestic architecture poor showing is but  
matter for surprise.

The fine parish church is dedicated to St. Michael & All  
Angels - an unusual dedication for a church not  
seen on a hill, unaccustomed by the fact that this  
St. Michaels was attached to the famous monastery  
of St. Michael in Normandy. The glass of the east  
window in the north aisle has a set attached to it.  
At Beaminster <sup>was</sup> a woman working there who  
had suffered during the Civil War; the walls of the  
church, especially on the south side, have however  
repaired, by which she did not appear, but the  
Parliamentarians largely credited with all such acts  
of grace.

The factory, with pleasant grounds brings with it  
bottom flowers - the "Sweet native stream" of Thomas  
Warton, the younger, is not without description. The  
<sup>about</sup> ~~proprietor~~ of Pilling Mill <sup>before</sup> <sup>now</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>more</sup>  
Beaminster, a man <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>name</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>first</sup> <sup>introduced</sup>  
<sup>was</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>first</sup> <sup>introduced</sup> <sup>such</sup> <sup>learning</sup> <sup>into</sup> <sup>England</sup>.

L 2124. Eng. 3. v. 1

Notwithstanding its antiquity, Basingstoke hardly had  
much of English history, except as being in the near  
neighbourhood of Basing House at the time of the celebrated  
Crisp. One Elies Archer <sup>in</sup> gives a "True Relation" (1643)  
mentioning the frequent occupation of the town by  
the Royal Troops. <sup>tells</sup> shows the troops of the Parliament repelled  
themselves there, "in respect of the extremity of hard  
service & cold weather."

How did the town folk of Basingstoke regard this  
coming & going of the troops, calls the author of the war?  
Here is a letter which tells what we want to know - printed  
here by Canon Millard's kind permission. — \*

by kindness of Dr. James Williamson as in  
his history of the Civil War

\* The writer was much by Canon Millard's kindness  
& archaeological accomplishments. The following  
extract of the history of the Long Cross Chapel is an  
unworthy reproduction of a most interesting & charming verbal  
account given on the spot.

This pamphlet is replete with a little treason like  
less beginning, "Good News from South-Hampton  
and Basingstoke in Hampshire. As it - varrelated  
is a letter from thence by one Master Zoller, to  
a Merchant of good quality, in Lombard Street,"  
with folly as much more.

Basingstoke this tenth day of December  
1842.

Sir — We say my Lord grandsons troope of Horse  
and Colonell Greys Dragoones eleven dayes  
we had imployment enough to dress the meat  
& provide drinke for them, but last Friday they  
went away, & as we heard, or gone to Marlborough,  
& many say they heard no guns fire off very rarely.

The KING was reported blee in his Tower  
this day; here were many Gentlemen came thirty  
miles to meete him, but returned presently  
hearing the contrary. It hath beene a great charge  
to our Towne, they demanded two thousand  
yards pavilles cloth, & five hundred yards of  
linnen, at fourteene pence the yard. Both  
linnen Drapers bought seires in, but the clothiers  
swollen Drapers made no great rest, so they turned  
themselves come at one crop, the greater quantity  
at another.

Upon Mr Doctor Denby, let him be saved his  
purse in going away, but they made bold with  
his horse, he may come downe safely now, & see  
what a war: pray God send peace, & else see  
what will come to this land quickly. I hope you  
at London desire peace, aswell as we, though perhaps  
you are not comfull in danger as we are, yet enough;  
I believe you are not quite out yet; or thus will  
my low Great yours,

H. W.

22. Oct. 1892

## In Holy Ghost Chapel.

Working our way by means of steps up the chalk  
down crowned by that picturesque ruin which is the  
fate ~~ruin~~ <sup>intend</sup> of Basarginstot, we find ourselves upon  
the latter -

"A name which it is law of you,

A thousand years hath it borne that name,

And shall for a thousand more; -

For the latter is a very ancient burying ground,  
(A.S. lich, a corpse, as in 'lych-gate'), when it is said  
that Saxon kings were buried: there is a tradition that  
on one occasion, seven kings were buried together - com-  
perhaps, to the burying of Athelred II. There is another instance of the pleasing contiguity  
of things in Basarginstot: of all modern metropolis  
belonging to others, the cemetery is usually the  
rarest; most modern; its very raison d'être  
is, in most cases, that the parish churchyard will  
hold no more: but here the cemetery is an  
extension of the ancient lichen, a burying  
place a thousand years ago. Even now, however,  
there is something to be gathered from modern  
acts: when need such an extraordinary  
black and white chapel has been run up under  
the very shadow of a person full of dignity &  
girth? Reservation. This is a quiet, cool  
resting-place, with little of the heat & day  
air for complete sleep ~~as~~ the crawling  
heat-sweat of the lichen & link the mourn  
not yet grass grown with the flowers of memory.

Fox